

## PARENT HANDBOOK

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## INTRODUCTION

The Head of School, the Principals, teachers, and the administrators of Central Montessori Schools (CMS) extend a warm welcome to all students. In order to ensure that students have a happy, stimulating and successful school year, we have prepared this document, which outlines the school's policies and procedures. We ask that you read this document carefully and refer back to it for future reference.

## NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

CMS welcomes all children & employees regardless of country of origin, race, or religion.

We are committed to providing an educational environment that is free of unlawful harassment and discrimination. CMS will not tolerate actions, comments, words or jokes based on an individual's sex, race, age, religion or any other legally protected grounds. Any person who becomes aware of possible harassment should promptly advise the Head of School, Principal, Supervisor, or Administrator who will handle the matter quickly and confidentially.

## PROGRAM STATEMENT

Central Montessori School's (CMS) interpretation of Montessori pedagogy and programming is consistent with the Minister of Education's Policy Statement as set out in "*How Does Learning Happen (HDLH)*". It is important to note that Montessori pedagogy often describes children's activities as 'work' where the HDLH describes children's activities as 'play', but the activities, as experienced by the child, are one and the same.

We plan for and create positive learning environments by following the Montessori method of child development. Montessori programs have been shown to develop executive function, gentle play by connecting to the social, emotional and cognitive developmental needs of the child. Each classroom is comprised of mixed age groups which, reflective of society as a whole, create a community where children are free to progress at their own pace, learning from each other under the guidance of trained adults.

CMS believes that all children are competent, curious, and rich in potential. Montessori pedagogy places the child at the center of the learning environment with staff and materials as a means of taking on the mantle of their own development. The child has freedom of choice – within limits. He/She is given a lesson and then offered the opportunity to come to a deeper understanding through his/her own efforts and engagement.

Our *Program Statement & Program Statement Implementation Policy* describes our goals for children and the approaches that we implement to meet these goals, while diligently meeting all requirements of ONTARIO REGULATION 137/15. This program statement will be reviewed with staff, students and volunteers annually before they start working at CMS, and whenever an amendment is made. (s.46(3)(k))

CMS ***promotes the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children*** (s.46(3)(a)): We provide well-balanced and nutritious lunches and snacks, meeting the recommendations as set out in the *Canada's Food Guide*. All meals are served in a relaxed and social atmosphere where teachers join the children at the table to encourage them to eat. Each child has the freedom to choose what they want to eat and how much. Mealtime is set up to promote self-help skills and independence by encouraging the children to serve themselves as well as scrape their plates after eating and to try different foods. Children with food allergies and dietary preferences are carefully adhered to. Our staff monitor and document children's health and well-being and communicate concerns immediately with families when necessary.

We promote the health, safety, and well-being of the children by:

- Teaching the importance of hygiene with proper procedures for hand washing, blowing noses, sneezing etc.
- Enforcing Public Health guidelines around quarantines for various illnesses.
- Each child is signed in and out each day.
- Providing sensible, solution-based rules and guidelines regarding outdoor play.
- All staff members are CPR/First Aid trained and attend annual refresher courses.
- Ensuring that the following ***Prohibited Practices*** are not committed:
  - o *Corporal punishment of the child;*
  - o *Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a chair, stroller or other devices for the purpose of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child*

*from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;*

- *Locking the exits of the school for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the school's emergency management policies and procedures;*
- *Use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth;*
- *Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or*
- *Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.*

***CMS supports positive and responsible interaction among children, parents, childcare providers and staff (s.46 (3) (b)):***

Every classroom operates on a principle of freedom within limits and is based on the core Montessori belief of respect for each other and the environment. Each child is free to work at his/her own pace with the materials they have chosen. This gives them the opportunity to explore their natural curiosity, inquiry, and absorb what they learn. We encourage parents to carry the Montessori philosophy into their homes. This helps create a harmonious and mutually supportive atmosphere where children have a positive attitude towards school and receive lifelong learning skills.

We give children the tools and methods in order to encourage them to verbalize to peers and others what they want and how they feel. Staff continuously model caring and respect for others regardless of race, colour, sex, religion, nationality or social origins.

***CMS encourages the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate (s. 46(3)(c)):*** The staff at CMS rely on their empirical observations to determine new activities to introduce to the child. The aim is to encourage active, positive and self-directed learning. Emphasis is placed on “*PROCESS NOT PRODUCT*”. Creative learning allows children to work alone or in groups for social interaction and helps develop language, sharing, and cooperation skills during both indoor and outdoor times.

***We foster the children's exploration, play and inquiry (s. 46(3)(d)):*** Younger children are inspired and motivated by asking for explanations, while older children share what they have learned while simultaneously reinforcing their own learning and leadership skills. This also encourages an atmosphere of inspiration and co-operations.

*Free play* provides children with an opportunity to explore, design, create and carry out projects and foster creativity.

We provide many different materials in the classroom for children to express and explore in their own way, providing experiences in which they are encouraged to explore their environment and feelings freely.

***CMS provides child-initiated and adult-supported experiences (s. 46(3)(e)):*** A Montessori classroom is a prepared environment with materials appropriate for each learning level, allowing children to learn respect for one another and the materials around them. All materials are purposeful, clean, neat and complete. They must be accessible to the children, as well as encourage them to be patient and wait for their turn, or choose another activity, thus learning respect for others. The classroom is prepared to help children accomplish their goals and work independently by gaining confidence and practicing particular skills. The adults encourage, observe and guide inquiry-based activities, recognizing and addressing different learning styles of children.

***We plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported (s.46(3)(f)):*** Children are free to challenge themselves at their own pace, allowing them to build confidence and independence. Teachers at CMS are **accommodating and responsive** to the needs of the **individual** child. Opportunities are provided for each child to develop **social skills, cooperation and sharing**.

We believe that the best form of behaviour guidance is self-discipline. Children learn self-discipline, positive work habits and independence through working within **clearly established boundaries** and **consistent positive reinforcement**. A healthy self-image is nurtured through a relaxed, supportive atmosphere where each child is respected and valued as an individual. We encourage children to communicate their needs, as we believe in promoting self-regulation in a positive supportive learning environment. Staff are trained to listen to children's cues in order to support each child when encouraging self-regulation. We believe that every child is a capable communicator who expresses himself/ herself in many ways, and it is the staff's responsibility to help each child problem-solve at an age-appropriate level of understanding. Montessori education recognizes the individual potential in every child and guides each child to discover that potential. The aim is to encourage active, positive

and self-directed learning. The younger children are inspired and motivated by asking for explanations, while older children share what they have learned while simultaneously reinforcing their own learning and leadership skills. This encourages an atmosphere of inspiration and cooperation. At CMS we will work in partnership with families to achieve these goals.

**CMS incorporates indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time, into the day, and gives consideration to the individual needs of the child** (s.46(3)(g)): Each child who receives child care for six hours or more in a day has a rest period not exceeding two hours in length. Each child is permitted to sleep, rest, or engage in quiet activities based on his/her needs. The school provides beds and sheets and we ask that each child bring a blanket (which is sent home weekly for washing).

Children who receive care for six hours and more in a day spend time outdoors for at least two hours each day, weather permitting. Large motor skill activities are included in daily indoor and outdoor play which promotes good health and development for growth. It also aids in balance and coordination, promoting social skills such as sharing, taking turns and cooperation.

CMS also offers weekly activities such as yoga, music, gym time, obstacle courses and “Rainbow Fun”. Through these activities, children develop balance, coordination, flexibility, posture, rhythm and “team spirit”. The children are encouraged to increase their physical limits, which in turn allows them to develop confidence in their abilities.

**We foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children** (s.46(3)(h)): At CMS we believe in open communication with parents and foster engagement by communicating through school policies, our parent handbook, monthly calendars and seasonal newsletters. Parents are also updated weekly about upcoming events that have happened or will happen. Weekly/monthly program/ themes are posted outside each classroom for parents to view. We also offer after-hour educational opportunities, such as parent workshops and program information nights. Transparency is the key to open communication with parents.

**CMS involves local community partners and allows those partners to support the children, their families and staff** (s.46(3)(i)): If we find that we have exhausted our internal resources and need help dealing with children who may require extra attention and/or direction, we welcome third party involvement such as specialists from CCAC and Adventure Place to come and observe children and give our staff and families suggestions and recommendations that can aid in the further development of an individual child, if required.

As part of one of our weekly themes, *Community Helpers*, we arrange visits for dental hygienists, firefighters, police officers or other professionals, to come to speak to our students about their profession and how they help in the community. They provide children with information and goals for a healthy and safe growing experience. It also aids in building a connection with the community, contributing to the world around them. CMS also participates in the annual Terry Fox Run and other charity activities such as MS Read-a-thon, Jump Rope for Heart, Food Bank collections, toy drive and cleaning up our community to acknowledge Earth Day. All these activities foster a sense of belonging to the local community, our natural environment, and a collective universe.

**We support staff, or others who interact with the children at our child care centre in relation to continuous professional learning.** (s.46(3)(j)): We support and encourage our staff to regular continuous professional learning by having monthly meetings, weekly Lunch and Learns, workshops throughout the school year, and annual reviews and completion of all necessary documentation required by ONTARIO REGULATION 137/15. In addition to these, staff members are also encouraged to spend time at least once a year observing other classrooms in the school and at different locations. All staff receive updates on changes provided by CCEYA and are provided dedicated time to engage in collaborative and reflective dialogue in reviewing the impact of program strategies based on “How Does Learning Happen”.

As per s.46.(3)(k), we **document and review the impact of strategies set out in clauses (a) to (j)** through daily observation of what children do and learn, and reflect back to what they have achieved to set goals for their future learning. Our approach to learning is in alignment with the Ministry of Education’s *How Does Learning Happen?*, a resource developed to promote a shared understanding of what children need and what can be done to help them grow and flourish.

Our program statement is reviewed and signed off by staff, students and volunteers prior to interacting with children, annually and whenever modified. Through regular staff meetings, sharing of ideas and difficulties are encouraged to jointly modify our practices and procedures on an ongoing basis. CMS also has written procedures for monitoring compliance and contraventions, which set out recommended and prohibited practices.

CMS ensures that all staff members are monitored and in compliance with all the approaches set out in the program statement with respect to reporting, management and follow-ups. Monitoring also includes an ongoing review of practices, procedures and training needs.

## GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

### 1. PROGRAM OFFERED AT ALL CMS CAMPUSES

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR PROGRAM FEES FOR OTHER CAMPUSES. ([www.cmschool.net](http://www.cmschool.net))

Programs offered	Willowdale Campus	Maplehurst Campus	Maplehurst Early Years (180 Sheppard Ave. E)	York Mills Campus	Thornhill Campus
<b>Infant Program</b> (8 – 18 months)			X	X	X
<b>Toddler Program</b> (18 months – 2 ½ years)	X		X	X	X
<b>Casa Program</b> (2 ½ - 6 years)	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Elementary</b> (Grades 1 – 3)	X	X		X	X
<b>Elementary</b> (Grades 4 – 6)		X		X	
<b>French Immersion</b> (2 ½ years – Grade 6)		X			

### 2. CENTRE HOURS

<b>Drop-off time (meet &amp; greet)</b>	<b>7:30 am – 8:30 am</b>
<b>Program Hours</b>	<b>8:30 am – 3:30 pm</b>
<b>Pick-up time</b>	<b>3:30 pm – 5:00 pm</b>
<b>Extended Hours</b>	<b>5:00 pm – 6:00 pm (additional fee is required)</b>

### 3. CANADA-WIDE EARLY LEARNING & CHILD CARE (CWELCC) SYSTEM

In March 2022, Ontario reached an agreement with the federal government to join the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) System. As part of the agreement, the province committed to giving families access to more affordable childcare options and to reduce childcare by 52.75% as of January 2023, and to an average of just \$10/\$12 per day by September 2025.

Central Montessori School’s York Mills Campus has enrolled in the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) System for students in the following age groups/classes: Infant, Toddler, and Preschool (Jr. Casa).

Base Fees refer to a fee that is charged for a child to receive childcare. These fees are applicable to receive the CWELCC rebate of 52.75%. Items included in Base Fees are registration fee, deposit, monthly tuition and lunch (for full-day students) and extended hours.

Non-base fees refer to any fees charged for optional items/services. These fees are not applicable to receive the CWELCC rebate. Items included in Non-Base Fees are Optional lunch (for a half-day student), late pick-up fees (after 6:00 pm), extra childcare days, NSF fees, field trips, and extra-curricular activities, such as art, music, french, etc.

#### 4. FEE STRUCTURE

Effective April 1, 2024, Toronto Children Services has approved a revised CWELCC fee structure that includes Winter and March break fees. These fees are blended into the annual base fees as below.

<b>PROGRAMS OFFERED</b>		<b>Monthly Frozen Base Fees 2022</b>	<b>Parent Fee after CWELCC reduction of 52.75%</b>
<b>Infant (10 to 18 months)</b>	2 Full days ( <i>Tuesday &amp; Thursday</i> )	<b>\$1295</b>	<b>\$611.88</b>
	3 Full days ( <i>Monday &amp; Wednesday &amp; Friday</i> )	<b>\$1567</b>	<b>\$740.64</b>
	5 Full days	<b>\$2090</b>	<b>\$987.25</b>
<b>Toddler (18 months to 2.6 years)</b>	2 Full days ( <i>Tuesday &amp; Thursday</i> )	<b>\$1195</b>	<b>\$564.63</b>
	3 Full days ( <i>Monday &amp; Wednesday &amp; Friday</i> )	<b>\$1437</b>	<b>\$679.21</b>
	5 Full days	<b>\$1990</b>	<b>\$940.27</b>
<b>Jr. Casa (2.6 – 3.8 years)</b>	5 Half days mornings (pick up at 12:00)	<b>\$1190</b>	<b>\$562.27</b>
	5 Half days afternoon (drop-off at 1:00)	<b>\$1010</b>	<b>\$477.25</b>
	5 Full Days	<b>\$1780</b>	<b>\$841.05</b>
<b>Extended Hours (Optional) 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.</b>		<b>\$100</b>	<b>\$47.25</b>

#### 5. WAITING LIST POLICY

In order to be placed on a waiting list, families must provide a completed admission form, signed on the day the child will be placed on the list. All information collected will be private and confidential, only to be used for admission purposes by school administrators.

CMS does not collect a fee for the placement of a child on a school waiting list for admission. Priority shall be given to transfers from other CMS locations, siblings of existing students, and children of CMS employees.

The information on the waiting list will be available in a manner that maintains the privacy of the children listed on it, and information will be given to parents/guardians of the position of a child on the list upon request. Visible information on other children and their families will be physically concealed (using pieces of blank paper to cover the names of others that come on the list before and after the child in question), but the position on the waiting list of a child being inquired about will be ascertained by their parents/guardians.

Upon availability of placement, admission from the waiting list is determined on a first-come-first-serve basis, according to the date on the application/ day the child was placed on the list. Once placement can be secured, a non-refundable, one-time registration fee of \$1000 is payable to CMS.

## 6. ITEMS REQUIRED UPON ACCEPTANCE

To complete the registration process, the following must be received by CMS:

- A completed Application Form;
- Terms & Conditions Enrollment Form
- Up-to-date copy of Public Health Immunization Record;
- Copy of Birth Certificate;
- A **non-refundable, one-time** registration fee of \$1000;
- A **non-refundable** deposit equivalent to ONE month's tuition dated the day your application is received. This deposit is a pre-payment for the June tuition fee;
- Nine (9) post-dated cheques dated September 1<sup>st</sup> – May 1<sup>st</sup>;

## 7. NSF (NON-SUFFICIENT FUNDS)/ AND WITHDRAWAL POLICY

### NSF (Non- Sufficient Funds)/

Parents are required to add a payment of \$60 to all NSF (Non-Sufficient Funds) to cover banking fee(s) and the costs of administrating such NSF payments. If more than two payments are declined, parents will be required to pay tuition by certified cheque, bank draft, money order, cash, or credit card. Interest will be charged at the rate of 5% per month for payments made 30 days or more in arrears. Furthermore, CMS has the right to send any outstanding accounts to a collection agency if/when required, and any fees incurred will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian and you will be asked to temporarily withdraw your child from school until full payments are received.

### Withdrawal Policy

Sixty days' written notice is required in the event of a child's withdrawal from school. Prior to the withdrawal date, a "Written Notice of Withdrawal" form must be completed. This form is available at the office. Alternatively, parents may write a note, clearly stating the date and nature of their reason for withdrawal.

Tuition will be due for the sixty days following receipt of the Notice of Withdrawal even if the student is no longer attending school. If the sixty days written notice is not received, full program fees will be charged.

A permanent space cannot be guaranteed if you wish to temporarily withdraw your child. School fees are based on registration for a full year and any temporary withdrawal does not necessitate a refund. The deposit received with your application is applied to **June tuition only** and is non-refundable.

**CMS reserves the right to terminate services if policies are not followed or fees are not paid in a timely manner.**

## 8. CLASS PLACEMENTS

CMS determines the placement of each child based on the following:

- The emotional, academic and developmental well-being of the child;
- Maintaining the Montessori age-mix principle;
- Developing balanced classroom composition related to age, gender, developmental maturity, toilet training, special needs, personality, etc.;
- Observation by the Head of School, the Principals/Vice-Principal/Supervisor of each campus and classroom teachers. Specific requests by parents will be carefully **CONSIDERED** but **not promised**. Once an appropriate placement is determined, a change is made only if the administration and teachers feel that the student's development merits the change.

## 9. EXCLUSION POLICY

CMS reserves the right to exclude any child from attendance, temporarily or permanently, who is deemed by the Head of School to be interfering with the health, safety or educational development of him/herself or any other child in the program. CMS may ask/help find alternate care/school for the child if the staff and administrators feel they cannot adequately meet the

child's needs. This may also apply if CMS finds that parents/guardians are not cooperating/on board with the school's efforts to provide for the child's needs.

## 10. DEFINITION OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

CMS offers a *10-month* or a *12-month* program for the childcare section of the school and is open year-round, and only closed on statutory holidays\*.

During the December **Winter Break** and the March **Spring Break**, CMS offers **childcare** for parents interested in this service.

Our programs for **July & August** offer “themed curriculums” featuring special trips/events, cooking, science, music, drama, chess, arts & crafts, sports and French. More information including dates and fees are available in February/March.

*\*Statutory Holidays (CMS will be closed and no childcare will be available for children):*

<i>New Year's Day</i>	<i>Canada Day</i>
<i>Family Day</i>	<i>Civic Holiday (first Monday in August)</i>
<i>Good Friday</i>	<i>Thanksgiving Day</i>
<i>Easter Monday</i>	<i>Christmas Day</i>
<i>Victoria Day</i>	<i>Boxing Day</i>
<i>Labour Day</i>	

## 11. INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of inclement weather, the school will only be closed if the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) is closed. Should this happen, CMS will send out a message to families through Owlwise by 7:30 a.m. If the school is open and heavy snow is expected to slow commute times, we urge all families to kindly consider planning for a longer-than-usual commute for pickup.

## 12. DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

### No Smoking on School Property

The *Smoke-Free Ontario Act 2017* prohibits smoking or holding lit tobacco (the use of electronic cigarettes) in a child care centre; in the building, on the playground, or on the grounds of the school. This includes the parking lot and areas surrounding the outside of the building.

### Seat belts and booster seats

According to the Ministry of Transportation, EVERYONE including parents, grandparents, relatives, or friends, who drive with a child under the age of 8, or who weighs less than 36 kg (80 lbs.) and stands less than 145 cm (4'9”) tall, is required to ensure the child is properly secured in the appropriate child safety seat or booster seat, based on his/her weight or height.

## TIPS FOR THE FIRST DAYS/ MINIMIZING SEPARATION ANXIETY (for Infants & Toddlers)

**Infants and Toddlers** are just learning to separate from their parents and develop into autonomous and secure individuals. We ask that you help the transition into the school program by visiting with your child prior to enrolment and by allowing ample time each morning for an unhurried arrival. **For older children**, separation from parents is much different. If parents linger, these children may get mixed messages. They may translate their parents' hesitation to leave as fear. Therefore, we ask you to help your child by not staying in the classroom when your child begins school. Instead, we ask that you help transition your child into the school program by visiting the school prior to the first day. It has been our experience that once children begin school, brief drop-off times encourage a positive adjustment to school. Sending your child to class with a smile, a kiss and encouragement to have fun reassure your child that you approve. Always remember to tell your child that you will return, and always say goodbye before you leave.

### Arrival before 9:00 am

The importance of timely arrival and departure cannot be over-emphasized. All children should arrive on time (by 9 a.m.) in order to prevent distractions for other students. Parents should walk their child to the classroom. The teacher or assistant will



greet the child and welcome them into the classroom. Please close all gates and doors every time you enter and leave the school.

**Pick-Up and Drop-Off at Classroom Doors:** We are requesting parents to wait patiently at the classroom doorway when picking up or dropping off children. Parents walking into the room disrupt the focus of the children. At arrival, please say ‘goodbye’ at the door and allow your child to walk in independently. At the time of departure, please knock on the door and the teachers will see you and call your child to put away their work and meet you at the doorway. We ask that you not enter the room at this time. Your help with this would be greatly appreciated.

Your child’s safety is very important to us. Please do not leave children unattended in the hallways kindly adhere to the school rules and ask your children to walk down the hallways rather than run. If you are speaking to another parent, keep your child by your side so they do not wander around the school.

### **Departures**

Your child learns to expect you at a certain time each day. Please pick up your child promptly at the specified time. Children will be released only to authorized persons who are designated on the child’s pick-up list. The end of the day can be a hectic time for parents wishing to discuss their child’s progress with the teacher. Please make an appointment for a time other than the end of the school day, thereby enabling staff to attend to the children’s needs without distractions.

Please notify the school in writing if there is a change in authorized persons picking up your child. We **WILL NOT** let your child leave the school premises with anyone who is not on the contact list. If an emergency comes up, call the school office and inform them of who will be picking up your child, giving name(s), approximate age(s), and a brief description over the phone. Persons picking up children who are not familiar with school personnel must provide identification before the school personnel will release the child.

## **13. EXTENDED HOURS AND LATE PICK-UP FEE**

Parents picking up their child after the program ends are subject to a monthly Extended Care Fee which is a flat monthly fee for extended hours (5-6 p.m.).

CMS extended hours end at 6:00 p.m. at which time the school is closed. After this time, a charge of \$2.00 per minute applies and is payable directly to the staff member on duty that evening. Payment should be made no later than the next school day. We understand that you may be late due to poor weather conditions, such as a severe winter storm. On those days the charge will be waived.

## **14. ABSENCES OR MID-DAY APPOINTMENTS**

If your child is going to be late, absent, or has a mid-day appointment, please notify the school no later than 8:30 a.m. In case of absence due to illness, you must inform the office of the nature of the illness.

## **15. SCHOOL OFFICE**

You are encouraged to contact the school office at any time with messages relating to your child’s school day or if you have any questions relating to school registration, tuition, or special programs. The telephone numbers of all campuses are listed on our website.

## **16. PARENT ISSUES OR CONCERNS POLICY**

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our school and regularly discuss what their child(ren) is experiencing within our program. As stated by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, childcare providers and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our staff members are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by CMS staff and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to parents/guardians within 1 - 2 business days. The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to the parties involved.

### Confidentiality

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children’s Aid Society).

### Conduct

CMS maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modelling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party.

If at any point a parent/guardian, provider or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the supervisor and/or licensee.

### Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the [local Children’s Aid Society](#) (CAS) directly.

Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the “Duty to Report” requirement under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

For more information, visit <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaidthereportingabuse/index.aspx>

### **PROCEDURES:**

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:	Steps for Staff and/or Licensee in responding to issue/concern:
<p><b>Program Room-Related</b></p> <p>E.g: schedule, sleep arrangements, toilet training, indoor/outdoor program activities, feeding arrangements, etc.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the classroom staff directly</li> </ul> <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the supervisor or licensee.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Address the issue/concern at the time it is raised</li> </ul> <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- arrange for a meeting with the parent/guardian within 1 – 2 business days.</li> </ul> <p>Document the issues/concerns in detail. Documentation should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the date and time the issue/concern was received;</li> </ul>

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:	Steps for Staff and/or Licensee in responding to issue/concern:
<p><b>General, Centre- or Operations-Related</b></p> <p>E.g: child care fees, hours of operation, staffing, waiting lists, menus, etc.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the supervisor or licensee.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the name of the person who received the issue/concern;</li> <li>- the name of the person reporting the issue/concern;</li> <li>- the details of the issue/concern; and</li> <li>- any steps taken to resolve the issue/concern and/or information given to the parent/guardian regarding the next steps or referral.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Staff-, Supervisor-, and/or Licensee-Related</b></p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the individual directly</li> <li>or</li> <li>- the supervisor or licensee.</li> </ul> <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of staff, duty parents, etc. that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>	<p>Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person being notified is unable to address the matter.</p> <p>Ensure the investigation of the issue/concern is initiated by the appropriate party within [insert number] business days or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. Document reasons for delays in writing.</p>
<p><b>Student- / Volunteer-Related</b></p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the staff responsible for supervising the volunteer or student</li> <li>or</li> <li>- the supervisor and/or licensee.</li> <li>-</li> </ul> <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of students and/or volunteers that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>	<p>Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent(s)/guardian(s) who raised the issue/concern.</p>

**Escalation of Issues or Concerns:** Where parents/guardians are not satisfied with the response or outcome of an issue or concern, they may escalate the issue or concern verbally or in writing to the Head of School.

Issues/concerns related to compliance with requirements set out in the *Child Care and Early Years Act., 2014* and Ontario Regulation 137/15 should be reported to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch.

Issues/concerns may also be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies (e.g. local public health department, police department, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, fire department, College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, College of Social Workers etc.) where appropriate.

## 17. OWLWISE

Once the registration process has been completed, parents will be receiving an email to sign-up on *Owlwise*, an online secure system CMS uses as our student's database, and as a means of communicating between the school and home. Throughout the school year, parents will be receiving email prompts from *Owlwise* whenever newsletters, calendars or other school information is available on the system for review.

**Important:** Please be sure to update the system promptly to make changes to your child’s information on file. Up-to-date contact numbers, pick-up persons, hours, etc., are critical.

## **18. CLOTHING AND POSSESSIONS**

Help your child dress appropriately for the activities of the Montessori classroom, both indoors and outdoors. Please remember that the children will be painting, sitting on the floor, participating in physical education activities, as well as, working and playing outdoors during a typical day. No child should feel inhibited because of wet or dirty clothing; therefore students should have spare clothes at school. For Toddlers and Casa children, please dress your child in clothing which they can manage by themselves. Please practice with your child at home, so that they will feel confident in their dressing skills. Your child needs your patience, encouragement and consistency.

The following is a recommended list of items for each child to bring to school:

### ❖ **Spring and Summer**

- Water bottle
- Extra pair of underwear & socks
- Extra t-shirt, blouse or dress
- Cap or sunhat
- Sunscreen
- NO BACKLESS SANDALS or CROCS are permitted on the playground

### ❖ **Fall and Winter**

- Water bottle
- Extra pair of underwear & socks
- Snow jacket
- Mittens or gloves
- Scarf/Neck warmer
- Extra pair of pants, blouse/sweater, t-shirt
- Snow boots
- Snow pants
- Warm hat

**! Please have each item clearly labelled with your child’s name. !**

Children are discouraged from wearing clothing or backpacks depicting cartoon or violent characters.

Plastic “Shopping bags” must not be left in children’s cubbies. Children who nap are requested to bring a blanket, which will be sent home every Friday to be laundered and returned to school. All CMS students are prohibited from bringing electronic devices (cell phones, iPods, Ipads, Nintendo DS, etc.) to school for any reason. Any such devices will be kept in the office until the end of the school day.

## **19. LOST AND FOUND**

Unmarked items left at the school will be deposited in the school *Lost & Found* box. Please check regularly for missing items. Clothes not collected at the end of each term will be taken to a local charity. Labelled items will be taken to the appropriate classroom.

## **20. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Extra-Curricular Activities are offered each term (Fall, Winter, and Spring) for approximately 10 weeks per session. There is an additional fee for these activities and information is sent home each term indicating the activities offered, dates, times and costs.

## 21. ACTIVITIES OFF-PREMISES, FIELD TRIPS AND PARENT PARTICIPATION

The school may, at times, take a walking trip with the class to local neighbourhood places such as the library, local park, grocery store, etc. This type of trip DOES NOT require a school bus and the children will be walking in small groups with their teachers, without a separate permission form being signed by the parent/guardian. By signing the “*The Letter of Terms and Conditions of Enrolment*” form, parents/guardians indicate their permission for such outings.

Scheduled school field/day trips are designed to complement our curriculum goals. Such day trips may include farms, museums, arenas, etc. Parents will be notified of each trip in advance, and receive a form with details about the day trip including times, destination, bussing and program information. The form will also include a permission slip to give consent for your child to attend this day trip. Individual permission slips must be signed and returned with the field trip fee before the child can participate. It is understood that as teachers accompany their students on all field trips, schooling is not provided to the students opting not to participate in the outing.

CMS welcomes parent participation on school trips, whenever possible. Please note that if you choose to volunteer on an outing, you must provide the school with a recent **Vulnerable Sector Check** (as set out under *the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA)* and *Ontario Regulation 137/15*). Forms can be requested from the school office.

**NOTE:** Parents/guardians of children under 3 years of age must accompany their child on school trips.

## 22. PROGRESS REPORTS

Toddler and Preschool children will receive a progress report twice per year: January & June.

Parent/Teacher interviews are held following each progress report. Please watch for the sign-up sheets during the above-stated times to discuss the progress reports with your child’s classroom teacher(s).

## 23. HEALTH & WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN

In assessing a child’s wellness and ability to participate and remain at school, staff take into consideration the following:

- a) The risk of spreading illness
- b) The child’s ability to participate comfortably in the program
- c) The parent’s responsibilities and schedule during the day

Staff use their judgement and consult with the supervisor/principal to decide whether to call a parent to inform them of their child’s health or to ask the child to be picked up. Staff must ensure that children are separated from their peers and taken to the illness room/office to stay when illness is suspected.

The following is a list of symptoms/illnesses for which a child may be sent home:

- Fever 38C or higher
- Diarrhea and/or vomiting (2 cases)
- Undiagnosed rash
- Communicable disease
- Persistent pain and discomfort
- Head Lice
- Uncomfortable or severe cough, OR
- Child is not well enough to participate in the program.

In the event that a child has been sent home, they are not to return to the program until:

- 1) A note from a medical doctor states they are well enough to return to school AND are not contagious, OR

- 2) They are on medication for 24 hours so as to no longer be contagious, OR
- 3) For diarrhea or vomiting for 48 hours symptom-free
- 4) Are symptoms-free as per Public Health recommendations.

Parents are encouraged to arrive promptly if they receive a phone call from the staff indicating that their child is ill and needs to be picked up. Families are encouraged to have reliable backup plans of friends and/or family members who are authorized and able to help in the event that parents are unable to get to the school in a timely manner. In the event that parents cannot be contacted, the emergency contacts will be phoned. If an illness or condition develops into that of a serious nature, the Serious Occurrence procedure will be followed.

## HOW TO KNOW WHEN THERE IS AN OUTBREAK

An outbreak occurs when there are 2 or cases of gastroenteritis in a specific room within 48 hours.

Early detection of signs and symptoms through observation of children’s health, as well as record keeping there of are crucial to the recognition and control of an outbreak.

CMS will notify York Region Public Health if an outbreak is suspected. If an outbreak is confirmed, CMS will be following guidelines communicated to us by York/Toronto Public Health.

Public Health requires that children do not attend school when suffering from any communicable disease. Parents **must** play their part in trying to curb epidemics by not sending children to school when they are sick. The **recommended minimum period of exclusion** is as follows:

- Impetigo: 24 hours after treatment has been initiated. Lesions on exposed the skin should be covered.
- Pink Eye: 24 hours after appropriate antibiotics has started.
- Strep and Sore Throat: 24 hours after appropriate antibiotic treatment has started
- Scarlet Fever: 24 hours after treatment has started and the child is able to participate in activities.
- Whooping Cough Until 5 days of appropriate antibiotics has been completed. If untreated, until 21 days after the onset of the cough.
- Red Measles: 4 days after the beginning of the rash and when a child is able to participate.
- Rubella: 4 days after onset of rash.
- Mumps: Until 5 days after onset of parotid glands swelling.
- Norwalk: 24 hours symptom-free OR 48 hours symptom-free during an outbreak.
- Ringworm: Until the appropriate treatment has been started

A child who returns to school after contracting any of the above communicable diseases must bring a note from their physician indicating that they are in good health and able to return to school.

**Any children exhibiting signs of fever, diarrhea or vomiting must be picked up immediately and may return to school only after they have been symptom-free (fever for 24 hours, diarrhea or vomiting for 48 hours).**

Please be aware that existing by-laws require outdoor play for all children. If you feel your child is too sick to participate in outdoor play, then it is deemed that your child is too sick to be at school.

**Children who require prescribed fever reduction medication every four hours (e.g. Tylenol) should NOT be at school. Staff cannot administer such medication without a doctor’s note.**

## 24. MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION POLICY

CMS will only administer prescription drugs that have a pharmacy label or are accompanied by a note from a physician. A Medication Dispensing Form must be completed and signed by a parent/guardian. This form will include the child’s name, the name of the drug, the dosage to be given, the date of purchase, and instructions for storage and administration.

## **25. ALLERGIES / ANAPHYLAXIS / EPIPENS**

CMS is a **NUT AWARE** environment. We do not allow items with nuts and/or nut bi-product in our centre for the safety of children with severe nut allergies. All allergies must be listed on the student's enrolment form. If your child develops any new allergies not listed on the form, please notify the office and the teacher(s) immediately.

**What is Anaphylaxis?** A severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction can be fatal, resulting in circulatory collapse or shock. The allergy may be related to food, insect stings, medicine, latex, etc. Epinephrine (EpiPen) is the first-line treatment for anaphylaxis and should be administered promptly during an anaphylactic reaction.

If a child is anaphylactic, prior to enrollment, parents/guardians must provide the school with an individual plan and emergency procedures for their child. Annually, all room staff and a trainer (Principal/Supervisor) will be trained by the child's parent or designated on the use of the epinephrine auto-injector (EPI PEN) and the details of the child's individual plan. Copies of the Individual Plans are kept in the child's file, classroom emergency bags, staff room, kitchen, gym and in every classroom.

If CMS is unable to cater food for the child with allergies, parents will be asked to provide the food for their child and will be asked to make sure that the food brought to school should be labelled with the child's full name. It must not contain any nuts or nut products as well as a list of allergens provided to the parent to which children may be allergic to in the classroom. All food must be kept in the original container with the ingredients list. If any food is brought and that is homemade, parents are to provide a list of ingredients that go along with that particular food.

Parents are requested to advise the school office if their child develops an allergy, and requires medication and/or of any change to the child's individual plan or treatment. The Individual plans will be revised yearly and as directed by the parent or physician.

## **26. INCIDENTS/ ACCIDENTS/ SERIOUS INJURY**

### **MINOR/ NON-EMERGENCY INCIDENTS/ INJURY PROCEDURE**

From time to time, minor incidents/ injuries may occur. Staff will apply first-aid and comfort as needed and an *Accident/ Incident Report* will be completed by staff which has to be signed by parents at the time of pick-up. A copy of this report will be provided for parents. Depending on the nature of the minor injury, a parent or contact person may be notified.

In the case of more serious incidents or accidents, CMS will follow its *Serious Occurrence Policy*.

## **27. SAFETY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

CMS conducts monthly Fire Safety and Lockdown Drills. These drills will ensure preparedness in case if a real emergency situation for staff and children so that everyone remains safe and accounted for.

Each staff member is instructed as to his/her responsibilities in the event of a fire, lockdown, or other emergencies, before commencing work for the first time.

Our Lockdown, Fire Safety and Emergency Management Policies & Procedures set our roles and responsibilities of staff in case of an emergency. In case an evacuation is required, each CMS campus has an emergency shelter within walking distance of each location. Throughout the emergency, staff will:

- help keep children calm;
- take attendance to ensure that all children are accounted for;
- conduct ongoing visual checks and head counts of children;
- maintain constant supervision of the children; and



- engage children in activities, where possible.

### **Communication with parents in case of an emergency:**

When the “**all-clear**” notification is given:

- 1) As soon as possible, office staff or other designated persons must notify parents/guardians of the emergency situation and that the all-clear has been given.
- 2) Where disasters have occurred that did not require the evacuation of the centre, the office must provide a notice of the incident to parents/guardians by email and/or send a “hoot” on Owlwise.
- 3) If normal operations do not resume the same day that an emergency situation has taken place, the office must provide parents/guardians with information as to when and how normal operations will resume as soon as this is determined.

When the “**unsafe to return**” notification is given:

- 1) Upon arrival at the emergency evacuation site, the office will notify parents/guardians of the emergency situation, evacuation and the location to pick up their children.
- 2) Where possible, the office staff will update the childcare centre’s voicemail box as soon as possible to inform parents/guardians that the child care centre has been evacuated, and include the details of the evacuation site location and contact information in the message.

## **28. SAFE ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL POLICY AND PROCEDURES:**

This policy, along with its associated procedures, is designed to facilitate the safe arrival and dismissal of children under the care of Central Montessori School. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of staff, students, and volunteers in ensuring the safety of children during these crucial moments. Clear guidelines are provided, including steps to be taken if a child fails to arrive as expected and procedures for the safe dismissal of children.

Central Montessori School is committed to ensuring that children in its care are only released to their parent/guardian or an individual authorized in writing by the parent/guardian. The release of a child will strictly adhere to the authorized individuals specified by the parent/guardian, and the center will not permit the release of children without appropriate supervision.

This policy is established to meet the requirements stipulated in Ontario Regulation 137/15, specifically addressing policies and procedures related to the safe arrival and dismissal of children in the care of the school.

## **29. SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS**

CMS supports the education of future professionals through field placements and volunteers as additional support and value to our programs.

Students and volunteers are supervised and function under the direction of qualified CMS staff, and are never left alone with children or replace a staff member.

## **30. NUTRITION AND SNACKS**

### **CMS is a NUT-AWARE environment.**

CMS provides a hot nutritious lunch and two snacks daily. Please ensure that your child eats a nutritious breakfast at home. The school provides a mid-morning snack, which is available between 8:30 – 10:00 a.m. Although lunch is provided by the school, children are allowed to bring nutritious snacks. In the case of parents providing lunch/ snacks for a child, a parent letter/ note will be required stating the reason why the lunch/ snack is provided by the parent. This letter/ note will be placed on the classroom information board and one copy will be placed in the child’s file.



### **CMS Food Guidelines:**

- Bring only nutritious (NUT-FREE) food items.
- Chocolate, candy, chips, soda pop, gum and junk food are not permitted.

If your child brings a snack, please make sure that it is free of NUTS AND NUT BY-PRODUCTS. All items must be labelled with the child's name.

Children are not to share their food with others at school. Please inform the school of ANY allergies or special dietary requirements for your child.

### **31. BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

We love to celebrate birthdays with our students. A week or so before your child's special day please contact your child's teacher and they will instruct you on what she/he would like you to bring to school so that a "timeline" of your child's life can be made. CMS encourages sharing healthy snacks for your child's birthday. We do not allow cakes, cupcakes or treats **with sugary icing, custard, whipping cream, etc.** We only allow the sharing of healthy snacks such as fruit/vegetable trays or cheese and cracker trays. All food brought to school must be packaged with ingredients listed on the label. Also note that balloons, party hats, loot bags, etc. may **NOT** come to school. Please save these items for celebrations at home.

### **32. PICTURES AND VIDEO CAMERAS**

The school may take various pictures and videos throughout the course of the year that may be displayed in the school, on the school's website, yearbook and/or on promotional material. These pictures can range from class trips to various activities the children participate in throughout the year. These pictures will **NOT** be used for any other purpose.

### **33. SHOW & TELL**

Generally, toys should not be brought to school. Children are encouraged to share fascinating discoveries with the class related to the theme of the week, culture, science or nature (i.e. found/made objects, books, articles, pictures). Please label any items brought to school so that they will be returned safely. "Show & Tell" is generally each Friday.